United Nations E/2002/49

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
26 April 2002

Original: English

Substantive session of 2002
New York, 1-26 July 2002
Item 1 of the provisional agenda*
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Themes for the high-level and for the coordination segments of the substantive session of 2003 of the Economic and Social Council

Note by the Secretary-General**

1. The present note is submitted to facilitate consultations among Member States on the themes for the high-level and for the coordination segments of the substantive session of 2003 of the Economic and Social Council.

I. Theme for the high-level segment

2. In paragraph 53 of annex I to its resolution 50/227, the General Assembly decided that, with regard to the theme for the general debate of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Council, following consultations with Member States and, through the Secretary-General, with members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, should present a proposal for a topical theme for the following year at the annual substantive session of the Council; and that, at the annual substantive session, the Council should undertake consultations on the theme for the high-level segment with a view to reaching a decision during the substantive session if possible, but in any case not later than at a resumed session in the autumn following the annual session.

* E/2002/100.
** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

02-35861 (E) 130502

A. Proposals of Member States

3. The Secretary-General had consulted Member States through a note verbale dated 21 January 2002, as a result of which he received the following proposals for a theme:

(a) Burkina Faso: "Financing of development and combating poverty: capacity of developing countries and contribution of developed countries";

(b) China:

(i) "Decent lives for the elderly";

(ii) "Safeguarding the rights and interests of disabled persons";

(iii) "Promoting the employment of youth";

(iv) "Strengthening the capacity-building of developing countries, especially their ability to participate in the multilateral trade negotiations of the World Trade Organization";

(c) Spain on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union (EU): "Global public goods".

B. Proposals of bodies of the United Nations system

4. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat had consulted the relevant bodies of the United Nations system through a letter dated 18 January 2002, as a result of which he received the following proposals for a theme:

(a) Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia:

(i) "A culture of peace for sustainable development";

(ii) "The impact of socio-economic equity on development";

(iii) "Issue of human rights under the title: 'Fostering an enabling human rights environment for sustainable development'";

(b) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations:

(i) "Financing for development, including rural development";

(ii) "Strategies for sustainable development, including sustainable livelihoods";

(iii) "The rural dimension of hunger and poverty reduction";

(c) International Atomic Energy Agency:

(i) "Water and sustainable development: the role of the United Nations system in meeting the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration";

(ii) "The role of food security in sustainable rural development and environmental protection in low-income food-deficit countries";

(d) International Civil Aviation Organization: "Financing of surface transport and civil aviation in the least developed countries as part of development of infrastructure for economic progress";

(e) International Maritime Organization: "Assessment of specialized developmental programmes and initiatives throughout United Nations agencies as a premise for ensuring best use of resources";

(f) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development:

(i) "Strengthening the development dimensions of the multilateral trading system";

(ii) "Globalization, migration and labour mobility";

(g) Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention: "The rule of law and development: the challenges posed by organized crime, corruption, terrorism and illicit drug trafficking";

(h) United Nations Development Programme:

(i) "Democratic governance and globalization" or "Equity and sustainability in a globalizing world";

(ii) "Capacity development for effective policy-making, implementation and monitoring to implement the millennium development goals";

(iii) "Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development";

(i) United Nations Industrial Development Organization: "Technological innovation and technology transfer for development: the United Nations system response".

C. Proposals of intergovernmental bodies

5. The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 2001/320 decided to consider, at a substantive session before 2005, devoting a high-level segment to the review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/CONF.191/11), and to consider later in the Decade further options for such review and coordination.

6. The Secretary-General, in his 2001 report on prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985-S/2001/574 and Corr.1), recommended that a future high-level segment be devoted to the question of addressing the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention (recommendation 4). In its resolution 55/281, the General Assembly called upon Governments, and regional and subregional organizations to consider the report of the Secretary-General and the recommendations contained therein, and also called upon relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to consider the report of the Secretary-General and the recommendations contained therein and to inform the Assembly, preferably during its fifty-sixth session, of their views in that regard.

D. Elements to be considered in selecting the theme

7. In selecting the theme for its high-level segment, the Economic and Social Council may wish to take into account the following considerations:

(a) The Council may wish to choose a major economic and/or social policy theme of topical interest;

(b) The theme should allow for an integrated and interdisciplinary approach;

(c) The theme should enable the Council to receive the maximum benefit from ministerial participation and from the presence of heads of agencies, funds, programmes and other bodies of the United Nations system, including the international trade and financial institutions;

(d) The deliberations of the high-level segment should provide political impetus for building areas of convergence and facilitate the consideration of the issues in question, including the emergence of new recommendations on the issues in the relevant forums (see General Assembly resolution 45/264, annex, para. 5 (d) (i));

(e) It may be recalled that the Agenda for Development (General Assembly resolution 51/240, annex) specified that the Council, at its high-level segment, should consider major issues for international cooperation in the economic, social and related fields. The high-level segment should be used for improving the synergy between the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system. In so doing, the Council should also contribute towards enhancing the interaction between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (para. 252 (a));

(f) It may also be recalled that, in the event that a matter of high urgency and priority subsequently emerges that would qualify as a theme for the high-level segment, the Council may, as appropriate, wish to consider that theme as an additional topic for discussion at its high-level segment (see General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I, para. 53).

8. In paragraph 7 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/27, the Secretary-General was requested to submit to the Council, when it considered the themes for its high-level and coordination segments, information about the functional commissions' multi-year work programmes. The requested information is contained in the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the work of the functional commissions in 2002 (E/2002/....) which has been submitted to the Council.

9. Box 1 highlights the themes examined by the Council at its high-level segments in previous years.

Box 1

Themes examined by the Economic and Social Council at its high-level segments since 1995

1995.	Development of Africa, including the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.
1996.	International cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances and related activities.
1997.	Fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows, investment and trade.
1998.	Market access: developments since the Uruguay Round: implications, opportunity and challenges, in particular for the developing countries and the least developed among them, in the context of globalization and liberalization.
1999.	The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women.
2000.	Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy.
2001.	The role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development.
2002.	The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development.

II. Possible themes for the coordination segment

10. In its agreed conclusions 1995/1[1] the Economic and Social Council invited the Secretary-General, taking into account the suggestions made in his 1995 report on coordinated follow-up to major international conferences in the economic, social and related fields (see E/1995/86, para. 57) and based on the work of relevant subsidiary bodies and through consultations with Member States, relevant organs of the United Nations system and specialized agencies, to offer suggestions for possible common themes for follow-up of major international conferences for consideration and decision by the Council. The Council decided that, in that segment, it should carry out a review of cross-cutting themes common to major international conferences and/or contribute to an overall review of the implementation of the programme of action of a United Nations conference. The Council also decided that the theme for the follow-up to conferences would be chosen at the Council's previous substantive session to allow for adequate preparations.

A. Proposals of Member States

11. The Secretary-General had consulted Member States through a note verbale dated 21 January 2002, as a result of which he received the following written proposals for a theme:

(a) China:

(i) "The role of the United Nations system in the enhancement of the capacity-building of developing countries";

(ii) "The role of the United Nations system in dealing with the issue of ageing";

(b) Spain on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of EU: "The role of the United Nations system in the coordinated follow-up to the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Conference and the Johannesburg Summit";

(c) Canada: "Assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, achieved through the implementation and review machinery, particularly with respect to the role of the United Nations in fostering an enabling environment for improved political governance".

B. Proposals by organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system

12. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs had consulted the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system through a letter dated 18 January 2002, as a result of which he received the following proposals for a theme:

(a) Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia:

(i) "Strengthening further the role of the United Nations in advancement of equal rights of people to satisfy their need from development activities";

(ii) "Strengthening the regional commissions for attaining sustainable development through the promotion of an integrated and coordinated mechanism to implement and follow up on the World Summit on Sustainable Development";

(iii) "Regional cooperation and the integration in an increasingly globalizing world: revitalizing the five United Nations regional commissions";

(b) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: "Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the millennium development goals";

(c) International Atomic Energy Agency: "Coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of the second proactive phase to address the effects of the Chernobyl accident through a new integrated development approach: medium-term interdisciplinary strategy and programme with a clear set of priorities for a 10-year programme of assistance with sustained overall socio-economic impact";

(d) United Nations Development Programme:

(i) "Governance, poverty, environment linkages";

(ii) "Harmonization of rules and procedures (see General Assembly resolution 56/201)";

(iii) "Governance and development: sectoral and holistic";

(e) United Nations Industrial Development Organization: "Follow-up and progress made after the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development".

C. Proposals of the intergovernmental bodies

13. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2001/41, decided to devote the coordination segment of one of its substantive sessions, before 2005, to the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2[2] on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system.

D. Elements to be considered in selecting the theme

14. In selecting a theme for its coordination segment, the Economic and Social Council may wish to take the following factors into account:

(a) The theme should be a major cross-cutting outcome of several international conferences in the economic, social or related fields;

(b) The theme should be a subject of operational relevance to a number of organizations of the system and/or a subject in respect of which several functional commissions have been active;

(c) The theme should have a significant policy dimension so as to maximize the benefit that could be derived from the presence of heads of agencies, funds, programmes and other bodies of the United Nations system during the discussions;

(d) The discussion of the theme by the Council and the agreed conclusions on the theme should contribute to enhanced coordination of policies and activities by the United Nations system.

15. The Economic and Social Council, in choosing its theme, may also wish to take into consideration information about the functional commissions' multi-year work programmes (see para. 8 above), as contained in the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the work of the functional commissions in 2002.

16. Themes examined by the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segment in previous years are listed in box 2.

Box 2

Themes considered by the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segments

1995.	Coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system and implementation of the results of major international conferences organized by the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.
1996.	Coordination of the United Nations system activities for poverty eradication (three sub-themes).
1997.	Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system.
	Freshwater, including clean and safe water supply and sanitation.
1998.	Coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.
1999.	Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development.
2000.	Assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.
	Coordinated implementation by the United Nations system of the Habitat Agenda.
2001.	The role of the United Nations in promoting development, particularly with respect to access to and transfer of knowledge and technology, especially information and communication technologies, inter alia, through partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector.
2002.	Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

17. It should also be underscored that the General Assembly, in its resolutions 45/264 and 48/162, provided for the Council's coordination segment to deal with one or more themes. In paragraph 57 of annex I to its resolution 50/227, the Assembly provided that the Council might give consideration to choosing a second theme dealing with concrete sectoral issues. Thus, in addition to the theme for follow-up to conferences, the Council may also choose a sectoral theme, should it decide to do so, at its substantive session.

III. Proposals by the Secretary-General

18. The Secretary-General, in his 2001 report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985-S/2001/574 and Corr.1), suggested that a future high-level segment of the

Economic and Social Council's substantive session be devoted to the question of addressing the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention. He proposed a more active involvement of the Council in the prevention of armed conflict, particularly because of its critical role in addressing the root causes of conflicts in the areas that lie at the core of its mandate.

19. The Economic and Social Council can support the efforts of the General Assembly and the Security Council in promoting the further development of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy of the United Nations. As noted above, in its resolution 55/281, the General Assembly called upon Governments, and regional and subregional organizations to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict and the recommendations contained therein and also called upon relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to consider the report of the Secretary-General and the recommendations contained therein and to inform the Assembly, preferably during its fifty-sixth session, of their views in that regard. The Security Council, in paragraph 22 of its resolution 1366 (2001), looked forward to further consideration of the report of the Secretary-General by the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as other actors including the Bretton Woods institutions, and supported the development of a system-wide coordinated and mutually supportive approach to prevention of armed conflict.

20. The issue of conflict prevention has also been of concern to the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council. For instance, the Commission on the Status of Women has chosen the following theme, as one of the two thematic issues for its session in 2004: "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution, and in post-conflict peace-building".

21. The Economic and Social Council can contribute to a comprehensive and multidisciplinary discussion on the prevention of armed conflict and peace-building, and to further enhancing the efforts of the United Nations in this field. This will contribute to the strengthening of the Council, an issue that will be the subject of the 2002 coordination segment. The following theme is therefore recommended for the Council's consideration at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 2003:

> **"Addressing the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention"**

22. In its resolution 2001/21, the Economic and Social Council, recalling its agreed conclusions 1995/1[1] and its agreed conclusions 2000/2[3] reaffirmed its commitment to promoting a coordinated and integrated follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits and the reviews of their implementation. In the same resolution, the Council recognized the need to continue to enhance its contribution to the coordination and implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits by bringing together relevant cross-cutting issues in a comprehensive and holistic assessment of progress achieved.

23. In 2003, the Economic and Social Council faces a number of challenges in coordinating the follow-up to conferences and summits. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 55/162 and 56/95, the Council supports the Assembly in its responsibilities in reviewing the implementation of the Millennium Summit. This

provides an opportunity for the Council to connect the follow-up processes of the Millennium Summit and other major United Nations conferences and summits, such as the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002). The Council is uniquely placed in respect of enhancing policy coherence, within the United Nations system, in the follow-up processes to these conferences, linking the millennium development goals with economic and financial issues, discussed at the Monterrey conference, as well as various aspects of sustainable development.

24. In light of the above considerations and the proposals advanced by Member States and bodies of the United Nations system, the following theme is recommended for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council at the coordination segment of its substantive session of 2003:

> **"Promoting the coordinated follow-up of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and recent United Nations summits and conferences, particularly the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development"**

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/50/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 22.

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, para. 4.

[3] Ibid., *Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3/Rev.1), chap. V, para. 8.